

# NORFOLK ISLAND

Regional Council

11 April 2023

The Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS – 3 TO 5 APRIL 2023 – ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

### **QUESTIONS ASKED ON NIRC BUS TOUR, MONDAY 3 APRIL 2023**

During the Bus Tour on Monday 3 April two questions were asked which Council took on notice to respond later to the Standing Committee. The questions and responses are as follows: -

**1. What is the average cost to reconstruct a road surface in bad condition, with bitumen seal?**

The estimated budget cost per kilometre for an average road width of 6.0m with two-coat emulsion chip seal to repair a badly affected section of road on the Island is approx. \$735K per km.

**2. Are there any provisions contained in the Queensland Local Government Act for special arrangements for ratepayers who experience difficulty paying their council rates?**

We are unaware of any exceptional provision in the Queensland Local Government Act for ratepayers who experience difficulty paying their council rates.

### **QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE JSC HEARING ON WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL 2023**

At the Public Hearing on 5 April 2023 conducted by the Joint Standing Committee, further questions were asked that Council took on notice to respond later to the Committee. The questions and responses are as follows: -

#### ***E-SCOOTERS***

**3. What provision has Council made for the provision of battery charging facilities for the new E-scooters on Island?**

Council has not made any separate provision for the supply of charging points for the E scooters on Island apart from as follows. Council's initial concept was to develop a hire plan on a ½ day or full day hire scope which would see the scooters returned to the hire facility each day. Scooters will operate for these periods on the original charge. There has been some discussion about the possibility of a longer hire period however Council is working with its insurer to qualify a range of requirements to determine the viability of short and longer term rental options.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

### Traineeships & Apprenticeships

#### 4. Can Council provide information on the “cancellation” of the “Future Leaders” and “Apprenticeship” schemes previously operated by Council?

No such initiatives have been ‘cancelled’.

At present Council, has four NIRC employees completing their final year of apprenticeship. This group of apprentices will finish between July 2023 and January 2024. This program is supported through Asuria, the local Vocational Advisor and Apprenticeship Network Provider.

The four apprenticeships will deliver trade qualifications in the following areas:

- Telecommunications
- Construction (carpentry)
- Electrical
- Mechanical

A decision as to whether to seek applicants for a new intake to an apprenticeship scheme will be made once the current intake of apprentices complete their individual apprenticeships. Council is currently supporting a construction apprenticeship placement through external placement following a redundancy in a construction position at Council.

Although in the early stages of development, Council is investigating the potential to establish a career partnership with the local school and Council Service Units - e.g. Fire and Airport Services, in the form of a traineeship program for local high school students. Other potential opportunities include career options through Norfolk Island Airport (NIA) including Security Screening; Airport Reporting Officers; and UNICOM Officer. These opportunities are unusual and diverse in a small remote community. In addition to these opportunities, pathways may exist in a number of government departments in the areas of administrative career pathways. Council continues to actively engage with the school community to seek ways to support programs to encourage the Norfolk Youth to consider their career aspirations and opportunities in their community.

Similarly, but separate to this, Council provides a Tertiary Education Bursary Grant Program to local students undertaking tertiary studies. The 2023 application process has recently concluded with a total of 15 Tertiary Education Bursary Grants being awarded to Norfolk Island students undertaking accredited tertiary and vocational studies not readily available on Norfolk Island. The grant program was established to assist with the cost of travel to the mainland and/or study expenses for enrolled students. Assistance is paid annually as a lump sum of \$600 towards a return airfare and \$500 for textbook and course associated expenses, with funding available for a maximum of four years. Students who study locally and who are not required to travel off island are not able to claim the travel component of the Grant program.

In addition to these programs Council supports the local Army Cadet Corp, providing a \$15,000 grant. Council is proud of the interaction and support that it provides to its local youth.

5. **What is NIRC doing to build people capacity for when it emerges from the period of Administration?**

**a) Workforce Training Initiatives**

NIRC continues to provide training and capacity-building opportunities for its staff. This includes mandatory training requirements for staff with statutory qualification obligations, e.g. Fire Service, Airport Staff, Electricity, variety of Operational Staff requiring high risk licences. Apprentices are supported in conducting relevant TAFE courses on the mainland through flexible leave and study arrangements. We have also recently funded a university post-graduate degree for a staff member working in public health. It is proposed to extend similar tertiary education opportunities in public health and wastewater management to other staff, particularly where assets are renewed and applied state-based legislation is progressively introduced to Norfolk Island.

A number of Council professional staff have recently attended and presented at local government conferences, both on the mainland and virtually. These include in the areas of waste management, natural resource management, planning and building and economic development.

NIRC human resources and safety staff continue to monitor and organise general training requirements as needed for staff. These include Senior First Aid, high risk licences (e.g. forklift) and chemical handling and application.

**b) Participation in NIRC Advisory Committees**

Interested community members gain direct experience in NIRC activities through participation in one or other of our advisory committees that have been established during the period of Administration. Advisory committee participants are required to undergo induction training in Code of Conduct requirements, meeting practice requirements and general information about NIRC. Participation in NIRC's advisory committees is a positive experience that builds organisational and community capacity through close exposure to Council activities and achievements. The advisory committees are an embryo for fostering interest in NIRC, developing expertise in Council topics, and potentially increasing interest in candidature at future Council elections: -

***i. NIRC Business, Innovation and Tourism Advisory Committee (BITAC)***

Terms of Reference:

[http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/sites/default/files/Norfolk%20Island%20Business%20C%20Innovation%20and%20Tourism%20Advisory%20Committee%20TOR%202021%200\\_0.pdf](http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/sites/default/files/Norfolk%20Island%20Business%20C%20Innovation%20and%20Tourism%20Advisory%20Committee%20TOR%202021%200_0.pdf)

The BITAC contributes to building a diverse and sustainable Norfolk Island economy through the identification of business opportunities. It advises NIRC on the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan, Norfolk Island Tourism Strategic Plan 2013-2023, and annual Operational Plan as they relate to economic

development, business growth and tourism activities across Norfolk Island. The BITAC assists NIRC in developing innovative business solutions to drive economic growth of the island community. It also assists NIRC in identifying barriers for business and explore innovative solutions to address these challenges. It evaluates progress against the Norfolk Island Economic Development Implementation Plan and identifies steps forward. The BITAC is providing advice and assisting in the development of an Economic Development Strategy.

**ii. NIRC Reserves and Conservation Advisory Committee (RCAC)**

Terms of Reference:

<http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/sites/default/files/Norfolk%20Island%20Reserves%20and%20Conservation%20Advisory%20Committee%20TOR%202021.pdf>

The RCAC advises NIRC on matters relating to Norfolk Island's Public Reserves, biodiversity conservation, and land management matters as they relate to Council land.

The RCAC advises NIRC on the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan, Environment Strategy and annual Operational Plan as they relate to the management of Norfolk Island's Public Reserves, biodiversity conservation, tree management and other land management matters. It assists NIRC in developing policies regarding land and biodiversity management, and protection of the natural environment. The RCAC evaluates, plans and recommends programs that enhance the value of Norfolk Island's Public Reserves and encourage the protection and enhancement of endemic species on private land. It assists and advises on community education as it relates to biodiversity protection and conservation, pest and noxious weed management and other land management issues as they relate to Norfolk Island.

**iii. NIRC Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC)**

Terms of Reference:

<http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/sites/default/files/Norfolk%20Island%20Sustainability%20Advisory%20Council%20TOR%202021%20.pdf>

The SAC aims to assist NIRC on matters relating to Norfolk Island's sustainability, namely waste management, water management (water quality and water security), food security and energy efficiency and a sustainable population.

The SAC advises NIRC on the implementation of the NIRC Community Strategic Plan, Environment Strategy, and annual Operational Plan as they relate to sustainability, namely waste management, water management, energy efficiency, food security and resource usage. It identifies opportunities for collaboration between Council, residents, business, other government agencies and visitors on matters relating to sustainability. The SAC evaluates and recommends programs that contribute to waste reduction, sustainable resource usage, and water conservation and usage. It assists and advises NIRC on community education as it relates to sustainability issues.

**iv. NIRC Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)**

Terms of Reference:

<http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/sites/default/files/Norfolk%20Island%20Youth%20Advisory%20Committee%20TOR%202022.pdf>

The YAC aims to provide support to and foster active, healthy, informed, and empowered youth. It provides a forum to raise issues of concern affecting young people on Norfolk Island. It promotes improved access to Council facilities and services for young people and a means for recommending how their needs may be satisfied. The YAC provides young people with a greater understanding of the role of Local Government and how they can participate in the decision-making process. It also provides the young people involved with leadership development opportunities.

The YAC actively works with Council staff on initiatives that are making a difference to the role and profile of youth in our Island community. Recent achievements have included the launch of the new NIRC Logo. The YAC played an integral part in developing and promoting the concept to their community and selection of the final logo. They made a presentation to Council about their selection process and reasoning behind their final recommendation on the choice of the new NIRC logo.

**c) Planned Candidate Workshops and Councillor Training**

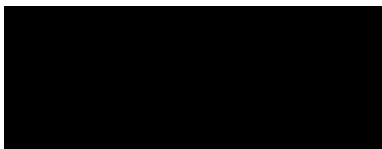
Pre-election candidate workshops and post-election councillor induction and developmental training will occur in the lead up to the NIRC councillor elections, anticipated to be held by December 2024. They will either be facilitated by appropriately qualified independent consultants or by one of either the LGNSW's or LGAQ's industry training units.

**d) Proposed 'Board Member' Training**

If the suggested 'Board' model of local governance is implemented by the Government, it is envisaged that Board members would be required to be AICD qualified, or to obtain a relevant AICD qualification.

I will be pleased to expand on this information on request.

Yours faithfully



**Philip Reid**  
**ACTING GENERAL MANAGER**